ıvestigative Unit or Warren Panel pposed by FBI

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\cting on an early tip from the ntral Intelligence Agency, FBI icials apparently successfully resisted ted efforts of the Warren Com- ssion to organize its own investigat- staff.

nstead of taking that step, the com- ssion wound up relying primarily the FBI and the CIA to serve as investigators for the inquiry into e murder of President John F. nnedy.

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FBI officials learned on Dec. 17, 63—the day after former Solicitor eneral Lee Rankin was sworn in as neral counsel for the Warren Com- ission—that Rankin was "consider- g an investigative staff to conduct ditional investigation."

"Frankly I think Rankin should be sc: uraged from having an investiga- ve staff," Al Rosen, head of the FBI's eneral investigative division, told lan H. Belmont, one of FBI Director Edgar Hoover's top assistants. Rosen aid the bureau "should make it clear at we stand ready to run out ad- itional investigative leads the com- ission wants covered."

The Senate Intelligence Committee oncluded just last year that both the BI and CIA withheld crucial informa- ion from the commission, particular- y in connection with the CIA's at- empts to assassinate Cuban Premier

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iel Castro and in connection with e significance of Oswald's contacts th pro-Castro and anti-Castro oups for the many months before e assassination."

The FBI files, made public this eek under the Freedom of Informa- n Act, show that the tip about nkin's plans came from the CIA's ief of counterintelligence, James gleton, who had "picked up com- nts from Allen Dulles" about the oposal. Dulles, the CIA's former ector who left the agency shortly er the Bay of Pigs debacle in 1961, s a member of the Warren Com- ssion.

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Just six months after the assassina- n, some Warren Commission offi- ls began worrying about gaps in evidentiary material amassed by FBI and about their vulnerabil- to criticism from outside.

The FBI was never too busy to erlook any damage to its reputation. p bureau officials were incensed.

Nov. 23, 1963, the hectic day after assassination, when Dallas Police ief Jesse Curry was reported to ve charged publicly that the FBI led to notify his department about e Harvey Oswald even though the reau had him under surveillance. n a three-page memo that same , FBI assistant director Cartha eke) DeLoach indignantly related t the Dallas FBI agent in charge rdon Shanklin had been told to hold of Curry "and set him aight regarding these allegations." l get Curry back on television and touch with the wire services to orm them "immediately of the sity of his statements."

I asked him [Shanklin] if he knew y Chief Curry would make such pid statements," DeLoach report to the FBI's John Mohr. "Shank stated that Curry was usually very operative, a very good friend of the l, however, did not think very fast l obviously made the above state- nts without giving any thought to repercussions."

urry "agreed to make the retrac- ıs" and told the media, with apolo- s to the FBI, according to the mo, "that the FBI was under no onsibility to report to the Dallas ice any individuals of subversive kgrounds who might be in Dallas ."

eLoach added that "we called ou- ces at both United Press Inter- ional and the Associated Press" as i as "Jerry O'Leary of the 'Wash- ton Evening Star'" who was in las and who agreed to contact Cur- mmediately. DeLoach said O'Leary r called back to say he had inter- ved Curry and "has prepared an cle putting Curry on record as ng there was a misunderstanding." urry "further told O'Leary that neone last night told him the FBI recently interviewed Oswald." ry added that he now knows thi e false."

BI agents questioned Oswald twice ength in 1962 following his return n Russia. An FBI agent in New Or- ns also interviewed Oswald in Au-

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gust, 1963, following his arrest there in connection with his distribution of Fair Play for Cuba leaflets.

FBI agent James Hosty of Dallas had been looking for Oswald in early November and was informed by Ruth Paine, friend and landlady of Oswald's wife, Marina, that he was working at the Texas School Book Depository.

Nonetheless, UPI reported on the afternoon of Nov. 23: "Police at first said the FBI, knowing of Oswald and his pro-Communist, pro-Castro background, had questioned him a week ago in Dallas. Later the police withdrew the statement as not in accordance with the facts."

While the FBI researched its files for derogatory information on people who may have written things critical of or embarrassing to the bureau, it also kept what it called a "Special Correspondents List," in which it rewarded its friends, including Leslie Scott, editor of "Security Gazette," a British publication.

Always attentive to what the national and international media was saying about the assassination and investigation, high-level bureau officials frequently exchanged memos summarizing the latest articles. A Jan. 9, 1964, memo to assistant director DeLoach summarized an article in "Security Gazette," which described breaches in security surrounding the Kennedy trip to Dallas. The article concluded that the main reasons for the security failure were the lack of coordination between the FBI, the Secret Service and the local police, and the atmosphere of violence in the United States.

Because a search of FBI files showed the bureau to have "friendly relations" with the magazine, the bureau tried the old soft sell.

"In view of the friendly relationship that exists between the FBI and the officials of this publication," the memo said, "it is felt that the best interest of the bureau would be served by having Legat, London, contact Mr. Scott and tactfully point out to him the splendid relationship that exists between the FBI and the Secret Service."

Others weren't so lucky. Thomas Gittings Buchanan Jr. wrote a series of articles for the French newsweekly L'Express, expressing doubts that Oswald acted alone and that he may have once been an informant for the FBI or CIA. An April 8, 1964, memo noted that he was a member of the Communist Party who had been dismissed from the Washington Evening Star in 1948 when he informed his editor of his party membership.

One Buchanan article was caustically dismissed in the FBI memo with the note that it was "typical of his previous articles in 'L'Express' in that he deals in implications and previously published speculation on the guilt or nonguilt of Oswald, the claim that Oswald was part of a conspiracy, and the allegation that Ruby was also involved in that conspiracy."

Another memo of the same day said Mark Lane, then raising doubts about Oswald's guilt, "has long been a Soviet apologist, has participated prominently in the activities of various CP front groups and reportedly enjoyed CP support in an unsuccessful effort to secure nomination as a congressional candidate."

When Staughton Lynd and Jack Minnis wrote an article entitled "Seeds of Doubt" for The New Republic, which again raised questions about the assassination, White House aide Arthur A. Schlesinger Jr. forwarded it to the bureau. A Dec. 26, 1963, memo from W. A. Branigan to W. C. Sullivan, both high bureau officials, noted that Lynd had associated with "known Communists" and Minnis had been in touch with the Soviet embassy. In 1958, Branigan recommended that this information be sent to the assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

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Hundreds of telephone calls—many of them far-fetched and apparently from persons with nothing more than a casual knowledge of the case—were pursued with the same degree of diligence the FBI had tracked down early tips on the movements of Oswald.

The volume seemed to increase after it became known that Ruby, imprisoned in the Dallas County jail, was dying of cancer.

On March 7, 1964, Deputy FBI Director Rosen reported in a memo that 3,357 interviews had been conducted into Ruby's background and the slaying of Oswald, and that there was no evidence that Ruby had conspired with anyone before the shooting.

The Warren Commission accepted the FBI's conclusion in its own report of Sept. 27, 1964, but the tips continued, and the FBI kept on amassing new volumes of documents on Ruby.

A waitress in a Chicago restaurant, for example, was the subject of a lengthy report from Chicago FBI agents because Ruby had apparently dined there once in the summer of 1963 and attempted to "get her a screen test if she desired."

In lavish detail, the report told how Ruby had suggested the waitress resembled Elizabeth Taylor, and that he had telephoned her several times from Dallas offering to help pay her way through college if only she would go to Texas to meet him.

In other instances, the FBI recorded detailed interviews with people who appeared to have been nothing more than one-time patrons at Ruby's nightclubs. In many cases, the bureau followed up the patrons' innocuous statements with background investigations of the persons interviewed.

The documents also contain allegations of curious voyeristic sexual interests on the part of Ruby.